REMARKS

By this paper, new claims 28-39 have been added. Accordingly, claims 1-39 are now pending. Applicants note for the record that this preliminary amendment presents new claims for the Examiner's consideration, and therefore is not being submitted for any substantial reason related to patentability, nor has it been made in response to any claim rejection.

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Respectfully submitted,

R. Burns Israelsen

R. BURNS ISRAELSEN
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 42,685

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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

New claims 28-39 have been added as follows:

28. (New) In a network that includes a first server having a first mass storage device and a second server having a second mass storage device, a method of mirroring data stored on the first mass storage device to the second mass storage device so as to establish a virtual storage area network, the method comprising the acts of:

receiving a write request at the first server;

executing the write request at the first server so as to write data to the first mass storage device;

transmitting the write request to the second server; and

executing the write request at the second server so as to write the data to the second mass storage device, thereby mirroring the data at the second mass storage device.

29. (New) A method of mirroring data as recited in claim 28, wherein the data, from the standpoint of the first server and the second server, virtually appears to have been stored in a shared storage node of a storage area network.

30. (New) A method of mirroring data as recited in claim 28, wherein the act of transmitting the write request to the second server is performed by transmitting a copy of the write request that was executed at the first server.

31. (New) A method of mirroring data as recited in claim 28, wherein the act of transmitting the write request to the second server is performed by a mirroring engine.

32. (New) A method of mirroring data as recited in claim 31, wherein the mirroring engine is associated with the first server.

33. (New) A method of mirroring data as recited in claim 28, further comprising the acts of:

experiencing a failure such that the data is not accessible from the first mass storage device; and

executing a read request for data that has been written to the first mass storage device by accessing the data that has been mirrored at the second mass storage device.

34. (New) A method of mirroring data as recited in claim 33, wherein the failure comprises the first server going offline.

35. (New) A method of mirroring data as recited in claim 33, wherein the failure comprises a failure of the first mass storage device.

36. (New) A method of mirroring data as recited in claim 28, wherein the act of transmitting the write request comprises the act of transmitting the write request using a dedicated link between the first server and the second server.

37. (New) A method of mirroring data as recited in claim 28, wherein the act of transmitting the write request comprises the act of transmitting the write request using infrastructure of the network, wherein the infrastructure is also used by the network to transmit data between workstations and servers.

38. (New) A method of mirroring data as recited in claim 37, wherein the act of executing the write request at the first server comprises the act of using an I/O driver at the first server to initiate execution of the write request, wherein, from the standpoint of the I/O driver, the write request virtually appears to have been stored in a shared storage node of a storage area network.

39. (New) A method of mirroring data as recited in claim 28, further comprising the act of using a policing protocol, prior to the act of executing the write request at the first server, to determine whether the first server has write access.